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21 NOV 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Logistics

SUBJECT : Analysis of the Conference Questionnaire

Jack:

I realize that you intend to give the Conference Questionnaire to a group to look at in depth. I do, however, want to offer you a few observations which have not been surfaced in our post mortems.

The panels looked at the results in terms of the answers to particular questions and drew direct conclusions. This approach is, I feel, subject to error for a variety of reasons, and the principal reason is that the questionnaire was structured (particularly the Personnel and Training and Image sections) so that the questions interrelated. In this regard, certain questions were phrased anticipating a particular answer. As an example, Question 7 of the Personnel and Training section asks "Do you feel free to discuss your personal problems with your supervisor?" It was anticipated that the respondents would evidence what I believe to be a natural reluctance to discuss personal matters with a supervisor, or anyone else for that matter. Question 8 asks a supervisor if he is concerned with the personal problems of his subordinates. Sixty-five of 69 replying stated they were. These replies can be read on two levels. First, it says to the person who replied negatively that he is not alone in feeling that he cannot discuss his personal problems with his supervisor (25 percent of his colleagues feel the same way); secondly, it tells him that, regardless of the way he feels, the overwhelming number of supervisors feel a concern for his personal problems.

Question 4, 'Do you feel that your supervisor lets you know how you are doing and fairly discusses your strengths and weaknesses during the rating period?', should be read in context with Question 1, (Were you rated objectively in your last fitness report?). Question 4 would be useful in identifying a problem area if a significant number had responded negatively to Question 1. The fact is, 70 of 79 replied positively to Question 1. Obviously, if you feel you were rated fairly, whether your supervisor discussed your strengths or weaknesses with you is decidedly less significant than it might be if you were unfairly rated.

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A number of people replied that they did not get sufficient job satisfaction, were underworked, undergraded, and felt the opportunities in Logistics are not as good as they used to be. However, before one could draw a sound conclusion from these statistics, one would require certain additional data. First, you should know how workers in general, or government workers, or Agency workers respond to this type of question. Then our answers could be compared to determine the relative extent of "unhappiness" in the Office of Logistics. I think it is fair to say that in this imperfect world, a certain number of people are always going to feel underpayed, underworked, and undersatisfied with their work. (I would also question, in this case, whether it is statistically correct to add the answers. That is, I question whether the person who said that he was underworked is the same one who also felt underpayed.) However, in regard to the above, it might be worthwhile to feed back to the persons who replied negatively that, first of all, they are in a minority and that a significant majority of their colleagues feel adequately paid, adequately worked, and gain sufficient job satisfaction from their job. Secondly, they, themselves, have indicated that they are fairly treated on fitness reports, have had the opportunity to take meaningful training, feel qualified to do their job, and are a member of a Career Service which they feel does a very credible job of supporting the Agency. The point, of course, is that hopefully they would give some thought toward self-evaluation.

Elsewhere in the questionnaire, obvious contradictions appear. As an example, in the Image section nearly 50 percent of respondents replied negatively to Question 1 and positively to Questions 2, 5, 6, and 7, indicating that they felt the Office of Logistics was doing a great job of supporting the Agency and would continue to do so in the future. Questions 2, 5, 6, and 7 are more definitive than Question 1, and it would appear to indicate that, despite a gut reaction that loss of overseas jobs equates to a loss of ability to support, the respondents really feel that we can do the job well without these slots. Or it might be a comment of esprit de corps. The point, again, is that Question 1 cannot be taken out of context.

One final point on the narrative answers. I believe these should be looked at for what they do not say as much as for what they say. As an example, quite a few respondents proposed various reorganizations of the Office. It goes without saying that the Office is not so well organized that it could not be improved; in fact, certain reorganizations go on all the time. The fact that so many people are concerned and interested is, I believe, a healthy sign. But it is

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also significant that the suggestions did not "home in" on one particular reorganizational theme nor was there a consensus on a particular trouble area. As a "feedback" item, this response also says to the individual that he is not the only person with an idea on how to do things better but, rather, that he shares this thought with other, but different, ideas of his colleagues.

The foregoing are meant to be illustrative of my impressions. The answers may, of course, be looked at from a variety of positions and certainly deserve in-depth group analysis. I would, however, urge that the exercise not be viewed as a purely statistical gathering exercise. There are inherent biases in the individual questions and in the manner in which these questions were presented that precludes absolute refinement of the answers. The more significant insights to be gained from the answers are pertinent not to management, but to the individual employee and are found in a general awareness that is more philosophical than statistical.



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